

Partnerships for Life Annual Report 2024



Partnerships for Life
Global Initiative to Prevent Suicide

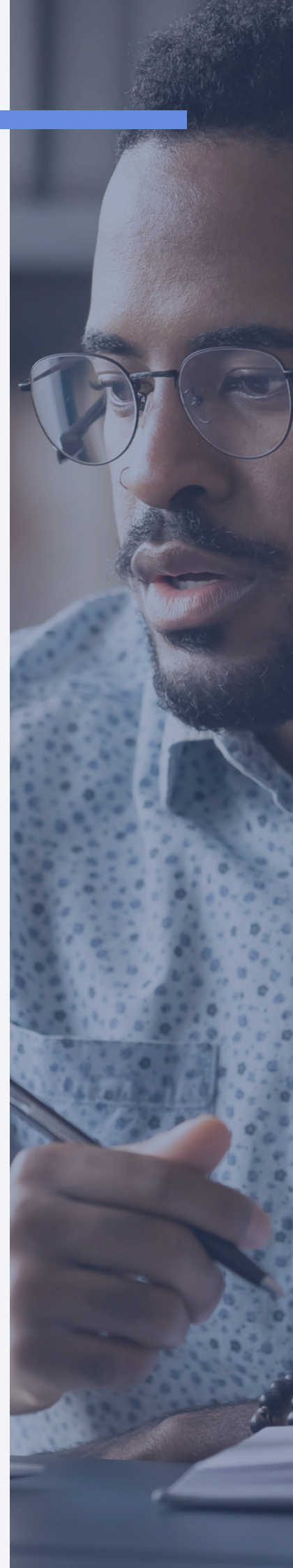
As in the previous year, the focus of the Partnership for Life initiative in 2024 remained on strengthening the network of global experts through strategic communication, engagement, and collaboration. This objective was pursued through a series of programs and projects implemented throughout the year, some of which are listed below.

Global Knowledge Exchange – Engagement

- Further developed a comprehensive database of key experts and stakeholders involved in the global suicide prevention network, establishing contact with influential individuals across 130 countries.
- Pre-conference workshops were conducted for the APAC, ESSSB, and Pan Am regions, with participation from five regions.
- Organised six joint regional webinars that engaged a global audience, with representation from six regions to foster learning on best practices and effective interventions for implementing suicide prevention strategies and programs, attended by colleagues from 77 countries.
- Commenced an extensive situation analysis by creating a three-stage process to include all countries, including those with limited data and resources. With the support of primary contacts and regional coordinators, the situation analysis has been underway since November 2024.
- Ensured effective global leadership through the Steering Group (12 experts) and the Leadership Planning Team (4 organizational development professionals).
- The Partnerships for Life webinar series fosters learning on best practices and effective interventions for implementing suicide prevention strategies and programs.

Regional Development – Collaboration

In 2024, the initiative engaged approximately 25 experts across all regions, forming sub-regional leadership teams with clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and communication channels. A sub-regional hub was established with part-time research assistants to support operations. The first three-day regional training workshop for Partnerships for Life (PfL) was successfully delivered in South East Asia, with participation from 9 of the 11 countries. Additionally, regional webinars were held on culturally sensitive topics tailored to specific regional needs: 4 webinars in the Americas, 2 in the Eastern Mediterranean with 9 countries represented, 4 in Europe, and 1 in the Western Pacific.





Global Awareness – Communications

In 2024, significant efforts were made in raising awareness about comprehensive national suicide prevention strategies. For example, regular contributions were made to IASP bulletins, keeping the global community informed on key developments. Symposia were presented at three major regional congresses – APAC, ESSSB, and Pan Am—bringing attention to critical suicide prevention issues. A consultative meeting with media stakeholders in Africa was organised over three days, facilitating important discussions on the role of media in suicide prevention. Regionally specific cultural resources and communication plans were developed to ensure that strategies were tailored to local contexts. Information dissemination was a key focus, and these efforts were integrated into the broader IASP communications strategy. Efforts to reduce stigma around suicide were promoted, with notable initiatives in Ghana and Pakistan, as well as addressing emerging trends such as the challenges faced by refugees, women, and girls. In addition to all the above,

Partnerships for Life (PfL) activities were aligned with World Suicide Prevention Day, amplifying the global focus on this critical issue. Several important publications were produced, including a short communication in the Asian Journal of Psychiatry (PfL regional), a comprehensive report on the development and impact of national suicide prevention strategies published in CRISIS (PfL global), and systematic reviews examining global progress. Finally, two documents summarising the situation in respect of countries with national and sub-national suicide prevention strategies was refreshed and updated in November 2024. Both national and sub-national suicide prevention strategies' documents can be accessed on the IASP PFL global information page (<https://www.iasp.info/partnershipsforlife/global-information/>).

National Strategies Policy Position

The Policy Position adopted by the membership at the 2023 General Assembly has been used as a tool for advocacy across our communications channels and for World Days. In particular it provided the backing for IASP Board and Pfl signatories to the letter to the Canadian Government, submitted by Mark Sinyor (Pfl Pan America Regional Coordinator) early 2024 which IASP supported with a coordinated communications campaign with the University of Toronto.

Asia Pacific Conference, Bangkok

The APAC Bangkok 2024 conference attracted 295 delegates from 38 Countries and had the following sponsors and exhibitors: LivingWorks, American Association for Suicidology, Standby, TikTok, CASA, Zero, Thailand Convention Exhibition Bureau, SDP Inc, LivingWorks, Standby, SingHealth Duke-NUS Global Health Institute. The conference objectives were to Facilitate Regional Cooperation, Enhance Regional Capacity, highlight the diverse perspectives. Key presentations focused on the region, culture and key populations.

One of the keynotes included a policy dialogue focusing on Research Gaps in the Region, which was run throughout the programme from Pfl and ECR pre-conference workshops, a workshop on improving design, implementation and translation of suicide research and panel/roundtable sessions on engaging key groups, resources, data and policy. Both the SEAR and WPR Pfl regions are working on two deliverables from this dialogue — two commentary papers from the Lancet Regional Health, one from Western Pacific and the other South-East Asian region.

ESSSB

The 20th ESSSB in Rome August 2024 continues the over 30 year collaboration between IASP and ESSSB. This year's collaboration included: Pfl pre-conference workshop, National Strategies plenary (Steve Platt), Pfl Symposium, IASP Assisted Suicide Working Group meeting, and announcements of future IASP events at the closing ceremony.



Decriminalisation

IASP-led decriminalisation advocacy

- IASP working group and IASP members engaged in decriminalisation met in Piran to scope out further direction of IASP's focus on decriminalisation, with priority given to providing guidance for stakeholders: communities, practitioners, academics, organisations and policy makers, post decriminalisation, moving forward.
- IASP advocacy on decriminalisation continues across many platforms including international days such as Human Rights Day and World Day of Social Justice. A special 3-episode series of podcasts on Decriminalisation was published over the final months of 2023. Panels and sessions on decriminalisation were held at the 2023 World Congress, 2024 APAC and the Pan-American conference.
- Individual country advocacy support continues with the Kenya National Representative across the latest push to take this to parliament. IASP; letter of support and backing documents are being shared.

IASP collaborations for decriminalisation

- IASP joined PAHO, United for Global Mental Health (UGMH) and other stakeholders to bring about the Regional Workshop on Decriminalising Suicide in the Caribbean in April and supports the subsequent Regional Coalition focused on decriminalisation in St Lucia, Grenada, the Caribbean and the Bahamas (the four remaining countries in the region where suicide is still criminalised). The Coalition will be part of the discussions at the upcoming Pan-American. Conference.
- IASP continues to co-lead the Global Mental Health Action Network's (GMHAN) working group on the Decriminalisation of Suicide. Having co-chaired the Group since its inception in 2021, elections are being held at the end of 2024 for new Co-Chairs.
- IASP supports Lifeline International's Decriminalise Suicide Worldwide campaign and corresponding Knowledge Hub from launch in London, October 2023 and subsequently through our communications channels.
- Lifeline Int, IASP and UGMH (UGMH) work collaboratively towards decriminalisation to ensure country efforts do not overlap and to present a stronger united voice on the global stage. The three organisations plan to co-host a side event at the upcoming International Conference on Public Health in Africa in 2025 (postponed from 2024).

Women & Girls

- Working group convened in late 2023, co-chaired by Dr Lakshmi Vijayakumar and Professor Jo Robinson.
- Two meetings held, plus a session at APAC 2024 exploring
- Research capacity has been identified in support of the group's work focused comparatively on Australia and India.
- Panel at the upcoming International Association for Women's 10th World Congress of Women's Mental Health in Bengaluru 2025 on suicidality in women in development.

Regional Coordinators and Assistants

Africa

- Regional Coordinator: Professor Joseph Osafo
- Regional Assistant: Priscilla Osei-Bonsu

The Americas

- Regional Coordinator: Associate Professor Mark Sinyor
- Regional Assistant: Daniel Sanchez Morales

Eastern Mediterranean

- Regional Coordinator: Professor Murad Khan
- Regional Assistant: Warisha Zahid

Europe

- Regional Coordinator: Professor Thomas Niederkrotenthaler
- Regional Assistant: Sangina Khudododova

South East Asia

- Regional Coordinators: Dr Lakshmi Vijayakumar, Professor Vikas Menon, and Dr Anish Cherian

Western Pacific 1

- Regional Coordinator: Professor Paul Yip
- Regional Assistant: Ingrid Lui

Western Pacific 2

- Regional Coordinators: Vanda Scott OBE and Associate Professor Gregory Armstrong
- Regional Assistant: Dr Luke Bayliss

Contact

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